



# LINCOLN CHAFEE

## U.S. SENATOR

### RHODE ISLAND

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **CHAFEE RETURNS FROM TRIP TO NEW ORLEANS**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Yesterday, **U.S. Senator Lincoln Chafee (R-RI)**, a member of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, visited Greater New Orleans, Louisiana, to get an up-close view of the situation on the ground following the devastation of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. Chafee traveled as part of a Congressional delegation which included Senators David Vitter (R-LA) and Mary Landrieu (D-LA).

“I felt it was very important to visit New Orleans and speak first hand with local officials and national experts to determine the mistakes and oversights that led to this tragic situation. This is especially important in Rhode Island, where we have the Port of Providence and many other low lying areas which could be seriously damaged in the event of a major hurricane,” Senator Chafee said.

“With this information, I am hoping we can take a hard look Rhode Island’s infrastructure to determine potential weaknesses and ultimately put measures in place to ensure we are better prepared for a category four or five hurricane,” he continued.

While in Louisiana, Chafee was given both an aerial and a bus tour of the hardest hit areas around New Orleans, and was briefed by Brig. Gen. Hunt Downer, an assistant adjutant for the Louisiana National Guard. Areas surveyed included the now infamous 9<sup>th</sup> Ward, the neighborhood which was reduced to ruins by the hurricane, and the lone area of the city where access remains restricted. Within the 9<sup>th</sup> ward, Chafee toured the breached levees, which were major contributors to the flooding of downtown New Orleans.

Chafee was also briefed on hurricane protection and coastal restoration issues, and also met with local business leaders to discuss the issues facing their industries.

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As a member of both the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs as well as the Committee on Environment and Public Works, Senator Chafee has taken an active role in monitoring the situation in the Gulf Coast from its beginning. Both Committees have held a number of hearings on the issues surrounding Hurricane Katrina, including causation, current problems, rebuilding strategies, and future prevention.

On September 28<sup>th</sup>, Senator Chafee co-signed a letter requesting that S. 728, the Water Resources Development Act of 2005 (WRDA) move forward in order to address many of the needs in LA including levees and wetlands restoration. The bill authorizes critical flood control, storm damage reduction, and environmental restoration projects across the country. These projects will help protect America's communities from the destruction caused by severe weather and flooding, as well as enhancing natural means of protection by restoring our fragile ecosystems. This legislation will also support vital waterways and ports – key components of national transportation system and the economy.

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